



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WORK STUDY SESSION
MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN RANCH AQUATIC AND FITNESS CENTER
15525 N. THOMPSON PEAK PARKWAY
SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85260
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2009**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Robert Frost, Chair
Jeanne Alspaugh, Vice-Chair
James Duchene, Commissioner
John Faramelli, Commissioner
Ron King, Commissioner
Stan Koczka, Commissioner
Harry Schlegelmilch, Commissioner (arrived at 4:18 p.m.)

STAFF: Jan Cameron, Parks and Recreation Director
Lindsay Adarme, Recreation Coordinator
Tim Barnard, Parks and Recreation Manager
Brad Bishop, Recreation Coordinator
Terry Erickson, Parks and Recreation Manager
Lorelei Oien, Administrative Secretary
Christian Peck, Aquatics Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

A formal roll call confirmed members present as stated above, noting the presence of a quorum.

3. WORK STUDY SESSION

The Commission discussed issues related to aquatics allocations. Ms. Cameron reported that Staff met recently with three aquatic groups that Scottsdale has traditionally sponsored, the Scottsdale Aquatic Club (SAC), Clavadistas del Sol (CDS),

and Scottsdale Synchro Arizona (SSA). Lap swimmers and other recreational users also attended. They discussed the possibility that the City would have to assess a fee to the clubs for use of the aquatic centers. Fees had been assessed in 2004, but Council removed them after six months. Due to the current budget environment, this is being reconsidered as a way to offset operating costs.

The three aquatic clubs have been very viable in part because of their relationship with Scottsdale, which has lasted for many years. Recently other aquatics groups have inquired about the City's arrangement with the three sponsored groups. Scottsdale's Executive Director felt that a competitive bid process should be required. The pool program costs a significant amount of money, just under \$3 million annually to run three year-round pools and one seasonal pool. The City bids out its partnership with the Sun Devil Masters, because it is an adult club, but youth clubs have historically been handled differently. The challenge now is to decide how to manage the arrangements in light of the City's procurement requirements, while honoring the service that the groups have provided to citizens. The relationships should be formalized in terms of the market. Ms. Erickson added that the City should consider all groups that are interested in having space allocated.

Chair Frost inquired about the new groups and their services. Ms. Cameron responded that one group is interested in providing competitive swimming, while another wants to provide competitive water polo. The City has not released an RFI yet, so other groups might be interested as well. Commissioner Duchene noted that traditionally the clubs were assigned pools according to their contracts. If provided an opportunity, the groups might be able to come to an agreement between them, similar to the effort undertaken by the Youth Sports Task Force. The City's procurement issue complicates the situation.

Commissioner Duchene said the Commission should be involved whenever major policy issues are proposed that impact Parks and Recreation programs. Ms. Cameron said the clubs are providing services to citizens, but the City has an obligation to manage facilitation of those services. If more than one group wants to offer services, the City must consider them all according to established policies. Chair Frost agreed that the Commission should have been involved earlier, but felt it was important to move forward. A good portion of the \$3 million aquatic budget goes to heating the pools in winter. When citizens look at that number, they begin to question the value of that expense in relation to other needs. If the pools are to continue operating year round, the City needs to develop clear policies and procedures with support from the swimming community. The clubs might have to contribute more money and share the pools more often, but Scottsdale has an interest in working with clubs with proven track records.

Commissioner Koczka said if Purchasing wants to open up a bidding process, the Commission should have input on pool availability. Priority for space should go to those clubs that have supported the City for decades, though all groups should be charged the same fees. Vice Chair Alspaugh inquired whether this was the first time that other groups approached the City for pool time. Ms. Cameron responded that it was. Mr. Bishop added however that citizens have inquired in the past about the nature of the clubs, and the agreements they have with the City.

Ms. Cameron noted that the field sports leagues are seasonal and have many more facilities to choose from. The aquatics teams operate year round and only have three facilities to work with. The City does not have the same ability to be fair and equitable to all who want to use the pools. The City prioritizes first its own programs and then the IGAs it has with the School District. The three clubs take the remainder of the time. In order to accommodate more groups, time would have to be cut from the established allotments. The difficulty in considering this a straight procurement procedure is that it entails selecting a service for the citizens that should be fair, equitable and of the highest quality.

Commissioner Duchene said he objects to what appears to be a case of Procurement directing Parks and Recreation on how to fix a problem. They should have asked Parks and Recreation for a solution that addresses their concerns. The Parks and Recreation Department cannot be run as a profit center. He felt the Commission should have the opportunity to find a solution from within. All three existing clubs and the two new clubs have indicated a willingness to work out a group solution. There is no need for a heavy-handed bidding process. He requested that Procurement convey their concerns to Parks and Recreation so that the users can address them. Chair Frost inquired whether that option was a possibility. Ms. Cameron responded that the most difficult hurdle to overcome would be the lack of pool time available once the three clubs were allocated. She questioned whether the three clubs could remain viable if their allotted time was reduced significantly.

Chair Frost proposed converting the process from procurement to co-sponsorship. The City's program cannot afford to continue operating unless extra dollars are forthcoming from the groups and the benefits they provide to citizens are demonstrated.

Ms. Cameron said the City could utilize that approach but would have to establish criteria against which applications are reviewed. The current agreements have worked for many years, but some refinement is necessary, given the current circumstances. Chair Frost proposed that all interested parties meet to arrange an equitable agreement. Once the agreement is made, the Commission could co-sponsor all the groups.

Commissioner King said these are essentially license agreements that allow groups to use City property, and as such are exempted from the purchasing code. A bid process might still be necessary because competition is involved, but he felt Chair Frost's idea should be utilized. The City could use an RFP to describe the necessary qualifications, including experience, hours of use, percentage of citizens, and fees.

Commissioner Duchene noted that for decades the swim clubs have put money into City facilities. Loyalty seems to be disregarded when talk turns to bidding. He agreed that Chair Frost's suggestion was the best route to take. Commissioner Koczka said Scottsdale needs the clubs in order to provide a good quality of life to citizens despite the budget reductions. The clubs in turn need the City.

Chair Frost proposed that the Commission renew the existing contract agreements for six months, which would provide an opportunity to forge a mutual agreement between all parties. Commissioner Koczka volunteered to help negotiate. Commissioner Duchene said an effort should be made to quantify the economic impact that clubs have, considering all the out-of-town visitors that come to Scottsdale for meets. He volunteered to assist that effort. Ms. Cameron said staff is working with Economic

Vitality to establish the economic impact of events that brings in guests from out of town. She noted that the \$3 million budget was used to serve 513,921 contacts last year from all user groups, and that cost includes utilities.

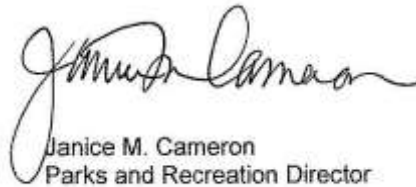
Commissioner Koczka said many people use swimming for therapeutic reasons. To them, it is a necessity. Commissioner Duchene said people who are not familiar with the pools might think they are only used in the summer, and may wonder why they are being heated in the winter. Not every cost the City has can be recovered; some things have to be done to benefit citizens. Chair Frost added that the City should communicate to the public the large number of people that would be impacted if the pools were closed in the winter.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the study session adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.

Meets established criteria.



Janice M. Cameron
Parks and Recreation Director